

**Human Rights Council – 33rd session**  
**Item 6: Universal Periodic Review Outcomes: SUDAN**  
**Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development**



Mr. President, Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome the fact that the Government of Sudan is considering ratifying CEDAW and urge it to do so as soon as possible. We also welcome the government's acceptance of recommendations that prohibit early and forced marriage, and setting an equal minimum age of marriage. However, the government must support the empowerment of women and girls to ensure that decisions to marry are taken freely and without coercion.

We remain deeply concerned that in relation to female genital mutilation, the Government is only trying to combat this practice through prevention and awareness raising activities rather than also through the adoption of a specific law prohibiting the practice. We would like to stress to the government that an essential component of these awareness raising activities must be to address the root cause of FGM and the social stigma, discrimination and marginalization of girls who have not undergone FGM.

We also recommend that the government commit to a full legal reform of the 1991 personal law that governs marriage and divorce so as to eliminate gender-based discrimination in marriage that prevents from acting in their own behalf to enter freely into a marriage of her choice.

We would also like to take this opportunity to encourage the government to adopt a national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and ensure access to rights based HIV/AIDS education and information, and undertake sensitization activities to stop the stigmatization of persons living HIV. In addition, we encourage the government to develop a clear policy with regard to comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and youth, and to ensure the location and staffing of health facilities are better coordinated so as to ensure coverage and access for all people.

Thank you